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21 August 1978

Herbert E. Hetu
Director of Public Affairs

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution

FROM : Lavon B. Strong
Deputy Director of Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Joe Trento Story

DCD provided us this draft (by phone) of the article Joe Trento has written entitled, "Was Howard Hunt in Dallas the Day JFK Died." It drags out the old "mole" story as well as the one on Hunt.

The Director was asked about the story today in Dallas.

We will need to consider what response the Agency should make to inquiries.

Lavon

Lavon B. Strong

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SUNDAY NEWS JOURNAL of 20 August 1978, Wilmington, Delaware

"WAS HOWARD HUNT IN DALLAS THE DAY JFK DIED" by Joe Trento/Jacquie Powers

A secret CIA memo says that E. Howard Hunt was in Dallas the day John F. Kennedy was murdered and that top Agency officials plotted to cover up Hunt's presence there. Some CIA sources speculate that Hunt thought he was assigned by higher ups to arrange the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald. Sources say Hunt, convicted in the Watergate conspiracy in 1974, was acting chief of the CIA station in Mexico City in the weeks prior to the Kennedy assassination. Oswald was in Mexico City and met with two Soviet KGB agents at the Russian embassy there immediately before leaving for Dallas, according to the official Warren Commission Report. The 1966 secret memo, now in the hands of the House Assassination Committee places Hunt in Dallas November 22, 1963. Richard M. Helms, former CIA director and James J. Angleton, former CI chief, initialed the memo according to investigators who made the information available tothe Sunday News Journal. According to sources close to the Select Committee on Assassinations, the document reveals: Three years after Kenndy's murder and shortly after Helms and Angleton were elevated to their highest position in CIA they discussed the fact that Hunt was in Dallas on the day of the assassination and that his presence there had to be kept secret; Helms and Angleton thought that news of Hunt's presence in Dallas would be damaging to the Agency should it leak out; Helms and Angleton felt that a cover story giving Hunt an alibi for being elsewhere the day of the assassination"ought to be considered".

Hunt, reached Friday at his Miami, Florida home, denied that he was in Dallas on Noyember 22, 1963 and denied that he had been in Mexico City anytime ater 1961. Hunt said that he was in Washington the day of the Kennedy murder. "...I have plenty of witnesses. I took off at noon that day and went shopping and had a chinese dinner in downtown Washington with my wife."

Hunt said he knew of no reason for such a memo to exist. He said he had never heard of the memo's existence. CIA sources who have provided the assassination committee with material pertaining to Hunt's alleged presence in Dallas, say that Hunt's story about shopping in downtown Washington was a coyer story concocted as a result of the memo. They say all Hunt's witnesses are CIA arranged and that his wife cannot be questioned because she was killed in a plane crash. The assassination committee will open hearings this fall on the Kennedy murder. Dawn Miller, spokeswoman for the committee, said that there would be "no comment on the report of a memo." We will be holding detailed hearings in September. Because of committee rules, that is all I am permitted to say."

Committee sources told the Sunday News Journal that both Helms and Angleton had been questioned by committee investigators but that the issue of the memo was not raised with either witness. Sources say Helms told the committee he could not answer specific questions on the CIA's involvement because of "inability to remember dates." Helms faulty memory on ITT's involvement in Chile led to his sentencing last year on two counts of withholding information from Congress, a charge reduced from perjury by order of President Carter. Helms could not be reached for comment. A secretary said that he was out of town and would not be available.

When Angleton was questioned by committee staffers, he was "evasive" according to a source who was present. Angleton could not be reached for comment. Asked to explain why a potentially damaging coverup plot would be put out on paper, one high leyel CIA source said, "The memo is very odd. It was almost as if Angleton was informing Helms, who had just become Director, that there was a skeleton in the family closet that had to be taken care of

and this was his response."

One committee source says the memo "shows the CIA involvement in the Kennedy case could run into the CIA hierarchy. We are trying not to get ahead of ourselves but the mind boggles."

As part of its $5 million expenditure on the Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations, the Committee contracted a Cambridge, mass. sonics firm to review tape recordings made as shots were fired at the Kennedy motorcade. The firm has provided the comm ittee's technical staff with new evidence which shows that four shots and not three were fired at the Kennedy car.

Sources say this would have made it mpossible for Oswald to act alone. "Combined with the memo covering up Hunt's involvement in Dallas that day, what we have so far puts a real dent in the Warren Commission version," a committee source contends.

Helms and Angleton currently are targets of an internal CIA probe and a new Senate intelligence committee investigation into the possibility of that the Soviet KGB penetrated the CIA with a mole, or higher level double agent.

Cleveland Cram, the former CIA station chief in Ottawa, Canada, was called out of retirement to investigate Angleton's and Helms' role in the penetration. Cram came across the Hunt memo in his "mole study" one investigator suspects. The urgency of the mole investigation within the Agency has reached "a more intense level since the memo was discovered" according to a source close to the internal investigation. Herbert E. Hetu, public affairs director of the CIA, told the Sunday News Journal, "I had heard rumors of such a memo but have been unable to track them down. I checked with our liaison with the assassination committee and he didn't know about it." The possibility of a "mole" or double agent in the CIA in connection with Oswald was first brought to light in Edward

J. Epstein's book, "Legend--the Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald." That book details Oswald's ties with US Soviet and Cuban intelligence. According to Epstein's editor at Reader's Digest Press which published the book, Angleton was a main source for the author. In 1964, a Soviet defector named Uri Nosenko told the CIA that Oswald did not act as a Russian agent in the Kennedy assassination. For year, according to the book, a battle within the Agency ensued as to whether or not Nosenko was telling the truth. That battle ended in 1976 when Nosenko was accepted as a genuine defector and put on the CIA payroll and given a new identity.

According to the book, Angleton urged that Nosenko not be accepted because he believed the Russian to be a double agent. Hunt's appearance on the scene in Dallas and in Mexico City at the time of the murder adds strength to a theory shared by some internal CIA investigators. They believe Oswald was working for US intelligence that he was ordered to infiltrate the KGB and that this explains his life in Russia.

They also believe that Oswald proved to be so unstable that he was "handled by the KGB into becoming a triple agent and assigned for the Dallas job." The same investigators theorize that Hunt was in Dallas that day on the orders of a high level CIA official who in reality was a KGB mole. Hunt allegedly thought he was to arrange that Oswald be murdered because he had turned traitor. Actually he was to kill Oswald to prevent him from ever testifying and revealing the Russians had ordered him to kill Kennedy, the CIA sources speculate.

CIA investigators are most concerned that either Helms or Angleton might be that mole. Hunt first detailed the existence of a small CIA assassination team in an interview with the New York Times while in prison in December 1975

for his role in Watergate. The assassination squad, allegedly headed by Carl Boris Pash, was ordered to eliminate suspected double agents and low ranking officials. Pash's assassination unit was assigned to Angleton, other CIA sources say. Hunt's fondness for strange plots has been widely reported. He is alleged to have concocted schemes ranging from Watergate to a plot to assassinate columnist Jack Anderson. Hunt is also the author of 45 spy novels.

It was also learned from CIA and committee sources that during the time that the Warren Commission was investigating the Kennedy assassination, Angleton met regularly with a member of the Commission--the late Allan Dulles, then head of the CIA and Angleton's boss.

Dulles, on a weekly basis, briefed Angleton about the direction of the investigation.

Angleton, according to sources, in turn briefed Raymond Rocca, his closest aid and the CIA's official liaison with the commission. Rocca, now retired, was unavailable for comment. His former wife, who also worked for Angleton, is now working for Cleveland Cram as part of the CIA mole investigation team.